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## THE CHRISTIAN ALMANACK FOR 1836.

Of the various Almanacks published in the United Kingdom, we consider this the cheapest and the best. Within a very small compass, it contains a mass of instructive and valuable information. The figure work seems to be very accurate, and the information regarding the eclipses, and other astronomical observations, is of a description which proves it to be from the pen of one competent to the task. There is, however, too great a mixture of matter for our taste; the extracts we give, though taken at random, will afford an idea of this want of classification. But we should rather suppose, there is a design in this, namely—to induce the reader to go through the entire of the book, and thus read all. In reference to the appearance of Halley's Comet (of the path of which, it will be remembered, we gave an engraving at the beginning of the last year, with an accurate description) are the following observations:—

"It was first discovered at Rome, at the Observatory of the Collegio Romana, on the 5th of August. Cloudy weather followed, which, together with the great glare of the moonlight, prevented further discovery in Europe till the 22d of August, when it was seen at Berlin, and on the 23d it was discovered in England. The close agreement between its predicted place and the path it is actually pursuing, is truly astonishing. When we consider the nature of the body in question, the length of its period, (75 years,) and the very small portion of its orbit in which it can be observed, it is a great triumph of science, and adds an additional proof, if one was required, of the truth of the great laws of nature as laid down in the philosophy of Newton.

"There is reason to believe that an appearance of this Comet can be traced back as far as 130 years before the Christian era; also that it is the same Comet that was seen in the years 525 and 599: in the latter year it is described as of prodigious magnitude and horrible aspect. It, again, in all probability, was the same as those seen in the years 550, 855, 930, and 1006; at this last appearance it was described as being four times as large as the planet Venus. It was also visible in 1230, 1305, and 1380. Up to this time we have only the successive periods of 75 or 76 years' interval, or double interval, &c. to enable us to identify the Comet; but from the last-named epoch the succeeding returns are free from doubt, as observations were made of sufficient accuracy to determine its identity. In 1456 its appearance is stated to have been terrific, and regarded in Europe as an omen of ill; the Turks being then engaged in a successful war against the Greeks, in which they overthrew the latter empire. The tail of the Comet, at this time, is said to have been 60 degrees in length, and of the form of a Turkish sabre; it was universally regarded with astonishment and awe.

"Its next returns were 1531 and 1607; in the former year it appeared of a bright gold colour, and in the latter it pursued nearly the same track through the heavens that it is at present traversing. In 1682, Dr. Halley and Flamsteed observed it in England: it was said by some to be as round and clear as the planet Jupiter, and that it had a tail of nearly 30 degrees in length. Dr. Halley then predicted its return in the latter part of 1758, or the beginning of 1759; its appearance answered the prediction. Another period of 75 years has elapsed, and it has fallen to the lot of the present generation to witness its return.

"When the Comet first became visible through the telescope, it appeared like an extremely faint nebula, or a minute portion of the milky way; it gradually increased in brilliancy as it approached our earth in its advance towards the sun, and about the middle or latter end of September, it was visible to the naked eye. On October the 6th and 10th, it was observed on the meridian below the pole, and on the 14th it was *sub polo* at Greenwich for the last time, but could not be observed on account of the clouds; it at this time exhibited a very brilliant tail of about six degrees long, but with a telescope of a very low power, the tail was traced to about twice that length, and viewed through such a telescope, it was a very beautiful object."

## ECLIPSES IN 1836.

This year there will be Four Eclipses, two of the Sun and two of the Moon.

May 1.—Partial Eclipse of the Moon, invisible in this kingdom.

May 15.—Annular Eclipse of the Sun; visible in this kingdom. This Eclipse will be more or less visible to the inhabitants of Europe, the North and North-west of Asia, the North of Africa, North America, and the Northern parts of South America. It will appear central and annular, on a line crossing Mexico, the West Indies, the North of Ireland and England, and the South of Scotland, through Germany, and as far as the Caspian Sea.

October 24.—Partial Eclipse of the Moon; invisible in this kingdom.

November 8 and 9.—Total Eclipse of the Sun; invisible in this kingdom.

## SYNOPTICAL VIEW OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

The Sun is the source of light and heat to our system, and the most considerable of all the heavenly bodies, governing all the planetary motions. The true diameter of the Sun is upwards of 882,000 miles; its bulk is 1,384,000 times greater than the Earth. The Sun is surrounded by an atmosphere, and is oftentimes obscured with spots; some exceed the Earth four or five times in magnitude. The Sun revolves on its axis in about 25½ days.

MERCURY is the nearest planet to the Sun, being about 36,000,000 miles from it. Performs its revolution round the Sun in 87 days 23 hours, which is the length of its year; its orbit is inclined to the plane of the ecliptic (that is, the plane in which the Sun always appears to move) at an angle of 70°; it revolves on its axis in 24 h. 5 m., which is the length of its day. The true diameter of Mercury is about 3,140 miles; its bulk 1-16th of the bulk of the Earth. The light and heat received from the Sun is about seven times greater than that received on the Earth.

VENUS.—Distance from the Sun about 68,000,000 miles; the length of its year is 224 days 16 hours; its orbit is inclined to the plane of the ecliptic at an angle of 3° 23'; the rotation on its axis is 23 h. 21 m.; its true diameter is about 7,700 miles; and its bulk is about 9-10ths that of the Earth. Venus changes its phases, like the Moon, according to its positions to the Sun and Earth, which causes a considerable difference in its brilliancy. The light and heat received from the Sun is nearly twice as great as that received on the Earth. Venus is surrounded by an atmosphere, and is the most brilliant of all the planets: it has been repeatedly seen by the writer with the naked eye, about two o'clock in the afternoon of a fine clear day.

The EARTH is also one of the planets that revolve about the Sun. Its mean distance is about 95,000,000 miles, and its diameter about 7,916 miles. It is accompanied by one satellite or moon.

MARS.—Distance from the Sun 142,000,000 miles; the length of its year is 686 days 23 hours; its orbit is inclined to the plane of the ecliptic at an angle of 1° 51'; the rotation on its axis is 24 h. 39 m.; its true diameter is about 4,100 miles, which is rather more than half the diameter of the Earth; its bulk is nearly 4-10ths that of the Earth. The light and heat received from the Sun is not quite half that received on the Earth. Mars changes its phases (somewhat as the Moon does from its first to its third quarter) according to its various positions with respect to the Sun and the Earth.

VESTA.—Discovered by Dr. Olbers, March 29, 1807. Mean distance from the Sun is about 225,000,000 miles; length of its year 1,325 days 17 hours; its orbit is inclined to the plane of the ecliptic at an angle of 7° 8'. The comparative insignificant dimensions of Vesta, as well as that of the three following planets, render them invisible, except through telescopes of considerable power; they have no assignable apparent diameter, and we have no knowledge of their absolute magnitude; owing to their minuteness they escaped observation till the beginning of this century.

JUNO.—Discovered by Mr. Harding, Sept. 1, 1804. Mean distance from the Sun about 253,000,000 miles;